

# Introduction of *Leptodactylus labyrinthicus* (Spix, 1824) (Anura: Leptodactylidae) in central Amazonia, Brazil

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**ABSTRACT:** This note reports new records of *Leptodactylus labyrinthicus* in central Amazonia (Manaus, Brazil). We found a small population on the banks of a small polluted tributary of the Negro river. The knowledge about the natural species range suggests that the population was introduced, probably carried to Manaus for commercial production.

The Pepper-frog *Leptodactylus labyrinthicus* is distributed from southern Amazon basin, to the southeastern and southern Brazil, extending westward to Paraguay and Bolivia (Heyer *et al.*, 2004; Heyer 2005; Santos and Haddad 2006; Frost 2011). The species occurs mainly near wetlands, and has been recorded mostly in open habitats. The Amazon rainforest and the Amazon river are apparently barriers to natural dispersal of the species, but some occasional records from introduced populations were obtained in central Amazonia (*e.g.* Lima *et al.* 2008).

In this study we report four specimens (Figure 1) of *L. labyrinthicus* (three males: INPA-H 28645, 137.7 mm SVL; INPA-H 28647, 162.9 mm SVL and INPA-H 28644, 166.7 mm SVL; and one female: INPA-H 28646, 147.1 mm SVL) found in Manaus (Figure 2), Amazonas, Brazil (03°06'18" S, 60°01'43" W; 03°07'34" S, 60°01'60" W and 03°06'50" S, 60°01'56" W). The specimens were found on 21 August 2011, during nocturnal visual searching for amphibians and reptiles on the banks of a polluted tributary of the Negro river. The specimens were collected under IBAMA/SISBIO permit n. 4558-1/518309.

The only population of *L. labyrinthicus* identifying in the north of the Amazon river was recorded in the coastal zone of Venezuela, but was later described as the new taxon *Leptodactylus turimiquensis* (Heyer 2005). The Amazon rainforest and the Amazon river are apparently barriers to natural dispersal of *L. labyrinthicus*, but geographic range of the species has been expanded by anthropogenic dispersal corridors. Thus, we believe that the population living in Manaus was introduced, and we present a brief description for its origin.

Large frogs are used for human consumption in Brazil, and some species have been bred in captivity. In the 90's farmers led *L. labyrinthicus* from southeastern Brazil to Manaus, with the intention of commercial production. However, this activity failed due to lack of management skills, and the frogs were released or escaped (A. P. Lima,

personal communication). The city of Manaus has grown significantly in recent decades, and many areas potentially suitable for breeding sites of amphibians have been

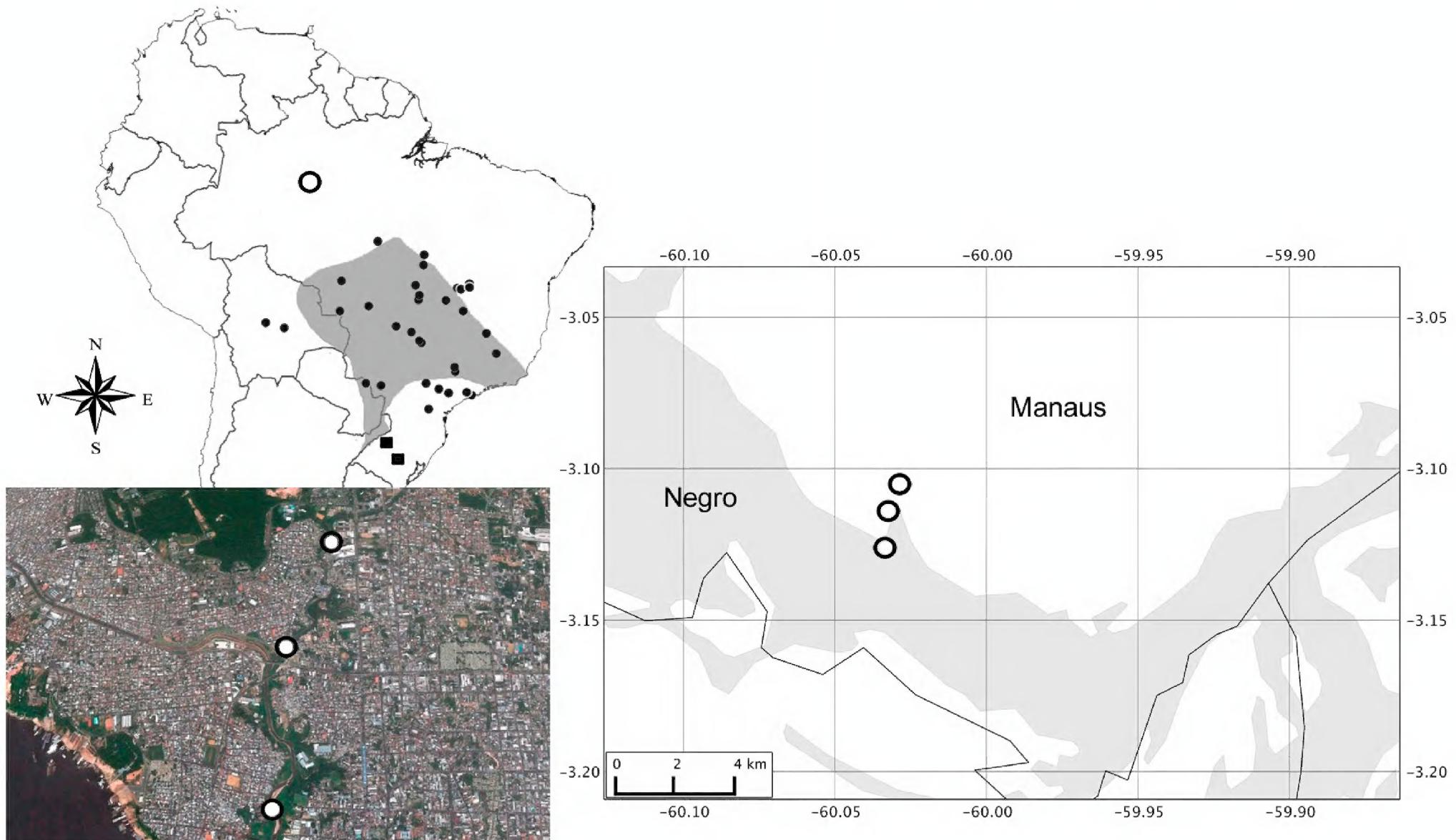


**FIGURE 1.** Adult male of *Leptodactylus labyrinthicus* (A) from Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil (INPA-H 28644) and detail of posterior thigh of the same specimen (B). Photos: Vinícius T. Carvalho.

disturbed by human occupation. However, *L. labyrinthicus* is apparently very tolerant to pollution, we found a population living in an area where garbage and sewage are constantly discharged.

*Leptodactylus labyrinthicus* is a large species, and it is a generalist-opportunist predator, feeds on many groups of invertebrates and small vertebrates (Cardoso and Sazima

1977; Vaz-Silva et al. 2003; Toledo et al. 2007; Fonseca et al. 2012). Through dispersal corridors opened by human occupation, the species can reach edges of forest in the outskirts of Manaus, as the Ducke Reserve (Lima et al. 2008). We have no data about the current population size living in central Amazonia, but population growth can be a problem for conservation of native species in the future.



**FIGURE 2.** Geographic distribution of *Leptodactylus labyrinthicus*. Closed circles = Heyer 2005; squares = Santos and Haddad 2006; gray area = Heyer et al. 2004 (IUCN red list); open circles = this study. The satellite image of Manaus was downloaded from Google Earth on July 26, 2013.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:** We are grateful to W. R. Heyer, M. Gordo and S. A. A. Morato for critically reading the manuscript. A. P. Lima provide us information about the introduction of Pepper-frogs in Manaus. J. Farias and G. Pinho helped us with the English translation. Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Amazonas (FAPEAM) and Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) provided scholarships to V. T. de Carvalho and R. de Fraga, respectively.

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RECEIVED: February 2013

ACCEPTED: August 2013

PUBLISHED ONLINE: September 2013

EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY: Pedro Bernardo